236 286 Wool is also very important to the economy of Awlad Ali. Lamb's wool is either sold or spun and woven into rugs. Goat's wool is spun and woven to provide the cover for the tents.

231 [262] [432] [438] Sheep and goats are rarely slaughtered for meat except on special occasions. Most male and many female lambs and kids are sold in the market and the money is used to buy the necessary supply of food (like tea, sugar, salt, etc.), clothes, and other household items. Most of 438 439 443 these items are obtained from the shops in the settled communities in the area, although some of the major items can be obtained only from large urban centers like Alexandria.

231 492 [236] [554] The other domesticated animals that Awlad Ali keep are the donkey for transport and riding, a few camels for heavy transport and also for wool, very few horses for riding on special occasions (they are considered as a status symbol for those who own them), and the dog to guard the camp and to protect the herds from wolves and other predators.

235 432 Poultry are usually kept for meat and eggs which are sometimes sold by the women in the nearby markets.

233 137 [132] The main occupation in the area is stock raising. Grazing lands extend generally south of the cultivated land in the northern strip. The growth of pasture plants is affected by the amount of rainfall in a particular year. Low rainfall causes acute shortages of pasture and herbage, and leads to the death of animals by both starvation and thirst. Pasture plants comprise a wide variety of bushes, scrub, and many other species of grasses, most of which have a very short life span. These plants normally persist from December to May; then the land is turned into arid, hard desert with only a few dispersed patches of dry grass.

462 424 them or any innate aptitude for them; this insistence is an index of the jealousy with which she is prepared to guard her rights. Each right derived from this or that small task is an extension of her control over the male.

462 424 252 The force and significance of this control is, perhaps, best seen in a woman's right to cook. At marriage a woman must have at least the minimum of cooking utensils, and one of the rights a man acquires in a woman is that she cooks for him. This is something a man cannot do for himself. [593] Therefore, when a man ill-treats his wife or threatens her with divorce, she can retaliate by refusing to cook, or leave the tent altogether to return to her father. A man bereft of this service is in a very sorry plight indeed. The legal dominance of the male, seemingly autocratic, is reduced at every point by the control a woman exercises through her exclusive right to perform tasks. The limits to the area of her coercive powers are significant. 562 They are confined almost wholly to domestic relationships. Legally, women suffer such disabilities that they are almost of the status of minors; in reality, their day-to-day living is far from intolerable because they are able to control males over a wide field of relationships.

462 424 231 Men, excluded in the main from domestic duties around the tent, perform tasks to which their legal rights are tied. While women have access to wells for water used by human beings, the transport of larger quantities of water over longer distances, requiring the use of camels, is a task which falls to the men. Watering of animals is done by men. Only they can slaughter the animals for food. The meat of an animal slaughtered by a woman is not "free," in a ritual sense, for human consumption. In an extremity only, a woman can, in effect, kill an animal, but the knife which cuts its throat must be held in a male hand, even if it is the hand of a very small boy. 462 The exploitation of the land is also the male prerogative. They [424] plough and sow the grain; incidental help may be provided by wives working [241] alongside their husbands during the early part of reaping, but the main reaping is done entirely by men. Transportation of grain to the mounds is also carried out by men, and it is they only who have access to the grain stores when quantities are withdrawn for family use. Sheep-shearing is [236] carried out entirely by males,[10] the fleeces are stacked by them and the [432] distribution and sales of these is directed by the male head of the tent.

Additional to these major tasks which males undertake are a number of minor ones. Men sew strips of cotton together to make clothes for both sexes. They also make rope of grass, albeit in a desultory sort of way, by [834] twisting together the strands between the palms of the hands. A number of [342] other tasks fall to the men by virtue of the fact that the sexes are separated in the tent by a divider of blanket material, which may be taken down when only members of the elementary family are about, but which is put

[461] [533] [538] [831] [10] This work is reserved for the younger men and takes the form of a festival during which lewd songs are sung and poems with obscene themes or references are recited loudly and within the hearing of elders, in a manner not dissimilar to the behaviour of bachelors at a wedding.